WHAT IS TO BECOME

OF THE CHURCHES

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WHAT IS TO BECOME OF THE CHURCHES?

OR,

A LAYMAN'S RESPONSE, TO A MINISTER'S INQUIRIES.

"WHAT is the reason that the country is shorn of its strength so extensively? What is to become of the Church, if we are not to have a different set of Ministers from what we have had of late?"—*A Doctor of Divinity, at a late Meeting of a Missionary Board.*

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following letter was written before the present remarkable work of grace commenced; and although there has been a change, to some extent, in the Churches and ministry; yet the work itself has confirmed the opinions expressed in the following pages. Perhaps, for the first time since the Day of Pentecost, a powerful and general work of grace has commenced, and in a very great degree progressed, outside of Church organizations, and independent of ministerial instrumentality. The divine approval of human efforts,—the individual, rather than corporate testimony and faithfulness,—the marked favour bestowed on lay labours, and the universality of the work, prove the unadaptedness, if not the incapacity, of the instrumentalities which, heretofore, have been regarded as essentially, if not absolutely, necessary to the progress of such a work of grace. It has not been so much "the foolishness of preaching," as "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man;" offered up, not within sectarian walls, but from the open, united, common praying-ground of the Lord's choosing, that has prevailed to bring sinners to repentance. The costly superstructures,—the expensive Sabbath accommodations of the possessors of money, have been less favoured in witnessing the return of prodigals, than the unpretending rooms, where mutual cries were

raised, and common entreaties made. Souls "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" but the "fountain opened," has not so often been found in the sanctuary, as out of it: less frequently among the leaders of the hosts of the Lord, than among those who follow. The Church has been used; but more to "gather up," than to "sow" and "reap:" less to win souls to Christ, than to shelter those already won; and the humbling fact stands recorded in numerous localities, that when the work began, and search was made for the sons of Levi, when found, they had "not separated themselves," and were not in a suitable condition to lead those whose prayers were being answered, and who were on their way to Jerusalem; or to give a certain sound to their trumpets, in calling sinners to repentance: and a spectacle, strange, as it was unnatural, has been witnessed, of souls athirst for salvation, passing the Church and her officers, to beseech an interest in the prayers of individual Christians, or the union bands of praying disciples: and when the Spirit convinced "of sin," men instinctively, as well as by the Spirit's teaching, fled to those who had the power of godliness, rather than the form and knowledge of it; and clung to those in whom the image of Jesus most clearly appeared, wherever they were found; regarding whence they came, less important, than whither they were going.

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WHAT IS TO BECOME OF THE CHURCHES?

"WHAT is the reason that the country is shorn of its strength so extensively? What is to become of the Churches, if we are not to have a different set of ministers from what we have had of late?"—*A Doctor of Divinity, at a late Meeting of a Missionary Board.*

IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTIONS.

TO THE REV. DR. ——.

DEAR BROTHER,—Many months have elapsed since I first noticed the above paragraph; and when I did so, my heart was pained; and I said, "Who! who! will answer these solemn and important questions? Will not the honoured brother whose heart the Lord has touched and led to propound them to the American Israel?" I had not the pleasure of your personal acquaintance, but from what I knew of you, and from the fact you had asked such questions, I was led to believe you were pecu-

liarly well qualified to answer them in the spirit in which they were asked, and with that faithfulness their importance demanded; and as I noted them for future reference, I once more said, "Will not the brother, or some other competent person, undertake to respond to such inquiries?" The occasion which gave them utterance was solemn, and the character of the brother who propounded them added force and interest to them; but more than these, were the amazing interests involved in them. I looked out upon the ministry and membership, and in sorrow dropped my head, and said, "Alas! alas! and who shall answer such interrogatories?" and then I turned to the multitudes in our midst, who were passing rapidly and unconcernedly to their final account, unprepared to meet their Judge; and to "the dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty;" and again I repeated the question, "Who! who! will respond to such questions?" And during the many months that have since passed, as often as my eyes rested on the note, the question would instantly arise, "Will not some one who is competent, undertake to inform us what is to become of the Churches?" But, so far as I know, the questions remain unanswered; and this, for many reasons, is to be deeply regretted: and as

no one who is competent seems disposed to undertake the duty, I have concluded in a brief manner, not to answer your inquiries,—for this I have not the ability to do,—but to so far point out some of the characteristics of the piety of the ministry and membership of the day, and the consequences resulting therefrom, as to call attention to the subject; in the hope that sufficient interest may thus be awakened, to induce some brother, who is competent to do justice to the subject, to assume the duty of responding to your inquiries; and if what I shall be enabled to say shall accomplish this, I shall not have laboured in vain. Besides, as we are more or less influenced in our views and opinions by the position occupied, it may not render what I shall say less worthy of notice, as from my humble position, I am obliged to look up to the ministry; for the sheep, in so constantly looking up to the shepherd, become quite familiar with his looks, habits, walk, life, &c., perhaps even more accurately than they are known to himself; and it is not impossible, but that such a lowly position may enable me to judge with some degree of accuracy on points, where a more elevated position might overlook, or but casually observe.

HOW THE QUESTIONS ARE TO BE ANSWERED.

I DO not pretend to sit in judgment on my brethren, much less the anointed of the Lord. Far be this from me. Yet I do propose to examine the present state of the Ministry and Churches in some of their professions, practices, opinions, attainments, influences, &c., and, so far as I am able, test them by the word of God; and if, in doing this, the judging by "their fruits," there should seem to be harshness or uncharitableness, I hope it may not be thought to be designedly so; for, to correctly understand the situation and prospects of the Church and Ministry, we must look at them as they are, and watch their influence on the world; and if in describing these, the plainness of speech demanded, should seem severe, it ought not to be deemed censorious. At all events, in what I have to say, while I speak with that plainness which should ever characterize the Christian, I shall endeavour to judge charitably; remembering that "He that judgeth, shall be judged."

WHAT PART OF THE CHURCH IS TO BE EXAMINED?

To ascertain,—"why the country is shorn of

its strength so extensively," and to judge of "what is to become of the Churches, if we are not to have a different set of Ministers from what we have had of late," it will be necessary to examine somewhat in detail the characteristics of the Ministry and the Churches; and, to avoid prolixity, I will confine what I have to say on these points, to that part of the ministry and membership, which give character to the whole, and which are regarded as Christians, and who are supposed to walk worthily before the world. There is another class, small in numbers, but strong in faith, who live when dead, and preach when in their graves; and there is still another class, more numerous than this, which perhaps in the judgment of charity, would not be regarded as having passed from death to life,—so manifest is their love of the world. It is not of either of these classes that I propose to speak, but of that great, intermediate, or middle class, which from numbers, wealth, position, &c., give character and tone to the whole.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY.

WHAT, then, is the present condition of the church and ministry? and, What is their influence on the world? Judged by "their

fruits," this condition, I feel constrained to say, is not one of as much usefulness to the world, or profit to themselves, as is desirable; and, judged by the word of God, it falls short of its demands. The Church is designed to be a light, and Ministers are standard bearers. The mission of the Church is the glory of God, in the salvation of souls; and to this high calling should be wholly consecrated. The work of soul-saving, under God, is not only a responsible, but a peculiar work; requiring cleanness of hands, pureness of heart, blamelessness of life, and an active, living faith. Those who engage in it, are savours of life or death; and which, under God, to a great extent, depends on themselves. They are representatives, exhibiting to the world the life and power of the religion they profess. They live and move amongst those who still require a sign, and whose book of divinity is the lives and practices of Christ's professed followers. They are commanded to ask for grace to enable them to discharge their solemn duties, and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." The power of heaven is placed at their disposal, and the promise of heaven's King is, "Lo, I am with you alway." The provisions are ample, the motives to action infinite, and the results contemplative of such amazing magnitude as to

defy calculation; and yet, moving in the midst of such influences and responsibilities, what is the Church doing?

THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT MINISTRY.

THE Ministry is learned, and often enters the pulpit to win souls to Christ, by a presentation of the philosophy of religion, rather than religion itself. The truth is preached, the seed is there; but obscured by a "beaten" covering. Results prove, that in many instances, the Gospel is presented in human, and not Divine strength; that the attempt is made to turn men to Christ, not in God's way, but by a process of reasoning, and displays of human wisdom, which often leave the subject so obscured, as to be quite unintelligible to the great majority of hearers. This was most clearly not St. Paul's method of preaching; for he spake not "with enticing words of man's wisdom;" nor yet, "with excellency of speech or of wisdom;" nor "with wisdom of words;" that the faith of his hearers "should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God;" for he was but an "earthen vessel," "that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of himself;" and in accordance with such teaching, the author of *Mammon*, not long before his death,

said, "Modern preaching is too much to the head, rather than the heart; too much the man instead of Christ; and too much the reasonableness of Christianity, rather than Christianity itself."

THE PRESENT PREACHING IS NOT A SAVOUR OF LIFE.

It seems to me, that there is great truth in these remarks; and that there is an obvious display of human wisdom, but little simplicity, but little dependence on the Spirit,—a strong tendency to self-reliance, and an evident desire for self-glorification; but whether these things be so or not, the painful fact exists, that the Gospel, as presented in too many instances, is not a savour of life; and the responsibility of the failure rests with man, and not God. Ministers preach, and men perish; and one man labours, and his successor enters into his labours, not of winning souls to Christ, but of keeping peace and promoting tranquillity in Zion; and thus years pass away, and with them generations of men, unprepared to meet their God; passing from beneath the pulpits, which for a lifetime had been sounding in their ears, to appear before their God, to give an account of the kind of sermons they had heard; and although

the chaff which served to obscure the truth, will not avail them to excuse; there is a point in the distance, when inquisition will be made for the blood of souls. It is not but that truth is preached; but it is preached in human strength. It is not Holy Ghost preaching. This, it seems to me, is the general rule, with many noble exceptions.

THE TWO PASTORS.—A CONTRAST.

MEN cannot be reasoned into heaven; nor will human wisdom draw souls to Christ; as facts abundantly and painfully prove. Let one or two sample cases suffice. Some years since, in the place where I then resided, among others, were two Ministers, with whom I was intimately acquainted. A——, my Pastor, was a learned man, with far more than average talents, and had enjoyed unusual advantages for the position he occupied. His sermons were learned, logical, and scriptural; but unattended with any apparent good results in winning souls to Christ. B——, was a self-made man, without a "liberal" education, and with only "fair" talents. His sermons were simple, but very practical. There were no attempted displays of human wisdom or eloquence; but revivals constantly followed his

preaching; and the secret of his success was to be found in the fact, that he lived very near to God. *He was a consecrated Christian;* and lived but to glorify God.

THE LEARNED PASTOR.

In my neighbourhood resides one of the ablest Ministers in the denomination to which I belong; and though I had often met him in Council, I had never heard him preach. Being in a distant city, I went on the Sabbath to a celebrated church, and was pleased to find my neighbour in the pulpit, as I had long desired to hear him; but when he had finished his sermon, I was pained and mortified; for while the discourse was exceedingly able, and so learned, I had great difficulty in following the train of argument; there was not religion enough in it, to have given it the character of a sermon, if it had been delivered elsewhere. As he proceeded in his argument, exploring the fields of learning, I looked about on the congregation to see what was the effect of such preaching; and while many were dozing, the mass were evidently making an effort to follow and understand the distinguished speaker; and that was called preaching the Gospel; but it was not such preaching as is followed by conversions.

THE POPULAR MINISTER AND PROSPEROUS CHURCH.

I KNOW a Minister, whose praise is in all the the Churches, who, for a quarter of a century, had occupied one field of labour; until, from a very feeble beginning, his membership numbered over six hundred; and yet, so far as man was permitted to see, not one of them had been converted under his ministry; nor any of those who had died during that long period; and still, as a Minister, he stood high; and his Church was regarded as prosperous, as there was outward peace, and the rapid growth of the place augmented the membership.

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY'S FRUITLESS LABOUR.

MORE than one fourth of a century had passed away, and with it many hundred souls from within the sound of that time-honoured bell; many of whom had, from Sabbath to Sabbath, year after year, obeyed its call to enter "the first Church," to listen to a learned, orthodox discourse; but alas! "the first Church," nor its learned Doctor of Divinity, nor the weekly prayer meeting, had been instrumental in their salvation. Children, whose parents the same popular Doctor of Divinity had joined in

wedlock, and by whom they had been baptized, grew up, and lived, and died, under the same influences, unchanged by the Holy Spirit. The Gospel had not proved a "savour of life," through the instrumentality of "the first Church;" and yet it was generally considered to be a prosperous Church. It was orthodox, peaceful, wealthy, and influential; not in winning souls to Christ; but in gaining and maintaining a high position in public estimation.

PREACHING TO THE LEARNED.

THE preaching is too much to the head; and in too many instances beyond the comprehension of the unlearned. The aim seems to be to edify, if not convert, the most learned and intellectual; and with what success, let the word of God, and the records of the Church testify. Such sermons do not produce godliness; and those possessing much learning and great intellects, when humbled, ascribe, under God, to simplicity of presentation of truth, and not human wisdom and much learning, the instrumentality of their conversion. When will Ministers understand this truth?

THE STANDARD OF PIETY IN THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY CONTRASTED.

A REGARD to truth compels me to say, that the standard of piety in the Ministry, is below

that of considerable numbers in their Churches; and when wrestling prayer brings blessings, the lowly chamber, and not the well-filled library, is likely to be the scene of that agony. Much learning may not produce madness, neither does it seem to foster humility, or reveal the humble boldness of faith; and the "enticing words of man's wisdom" are still relied upon to win souls to Christ, if not to exalt the creature. There is a disposition to preach to the rich and fashionable; while to "the poor," the Gospel is not very generally preached. Unlike Christ, many of His Ministers do not go after sinners, but wait for them to come to Christ's ambassadors; and while the rich become Gospel hardened, the great mass of the poor pass away, with but very little knowledge of the Gospel, except what has been presented to them through the lives of their more highly favoured neighbours; and such exhibitions of divinity, are not always transforming in their influence.

LOW STANDARD OF PIETY IN THE MINISTRY, LEADS TO AN INEFFICIENT CHURCH.

THE truth is, the Ministry do not enter into a high state of grace themselves; and thus encourage by their example, if not precept, a low state of piety; and, of consequence, an inefficient

Church. They may talk about high attainment, and great usefulness; yet without the possession of the one, and the practice of the other, their preaching is but as sounding brass. It is not a savour of life; and under it, men become hardened.

PREACHING FROM EXPERIENCE.

THE Lord does sometimes, it is true, speak through a Balaam, or a Caiaphas; but ordinarily, He uses for good, only such as speak from an "abundant" heart, and of that which they "do know," and can testify of that which they "have seen." To be made a blessing, they must first be blessed; and if they would kindle a fire on other hearts, the "live coal" must first be applied to their own "lips." If they would "comfort others," it must be by reason of the comfort "wherewith they themselves are comforted of God." To be successful, they must preach from experience. They must testify, as well as preach. If they demand obedience, they must themselves obey; if they ask for consecration, their own bodies must be "living sacrifices;" and if they call for holiness, they must themselves be holy.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MINISTRY.

TRULY, the responsibilities of a Minister of Jesus Christ, under any circumstances, are exceedingly great; but under the light, and the peculiar influences, favourable and adverse, of this age, they are really appalling. He has a noon day light, when those of understanding "shall instruct many;" but he also has the enervating, accommodating, inquiring spirit of an age, when even "some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them." No common measure of faith and faithfulness becomes the Minister of this day. He may fan his conscience with the reflection that he equals, perhaps, excels, father A——, or Dr. B——; yet where they fail in imitating Christ, duty still calls him. The "tree is known by his own fruit," and not that of another. The tests are plain and simple. They are "signs" and "seals" of God's own appointment. Are souls converted, and saints quickened? Here, where the visible guides public opinion, he may succeed in deceiving himself and others; but the judgment will reveal how far the "love of Christ" or the fear of man influenced ministerial conduct. Sermons seen in the light of eternity! Motive known! The value of souls understood! Yes, the inquisition,

not of Pope's and Cardinals, but of the Lamb, *must be met*. The search will be for the blood of lost souls, not for heresies. It will not be in a dark, dismal cell; but before an assembled universe; and in the presence of the Lamb, and where the lamp of Calvary shines. No instruments of torture will be applied; but those eyes which saw Nathaniel under the tree will be there; and "the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life."

DOCTORS OF DIVINITY.

THE Church is sprinkled all over with D.D.'s, and there is a feverish eagerness to secure such baubles; which, like riches, must be left behind; as such titles would sound strange where the song is, "not unto us;" and where the Lazarus's are "Kings and Priests;" and where love, faith, and meekness, shine more than knowledge. Some good men have such titles bestowed upon them; but the titles only remind them of responsibility, and not of greatness; and tend to humility, more than pride; and instead of fostering a spirit for a well-filled head, create a desire for a clean heart, freedom from sin, and a useful life.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CHURCHES.

If you turn from the Ministry to the Churches, you there find a corresponding state of things; for "there shall be like people, like priest." If the ministers preach themselves, or rely too much on human wisdom, the Churches "love to have it so." If you go to the sanctuary on the Lord's day, you will find a majority of the members in their seats, if the weather be favourable; and although there is not seriousness, there is decorum, showing that the head, if not the heart, is engaged. If you retire to the family circle, in many instances, you will encounter religious conversation, with worldly tendencies, or the reading of books of doubtful religious influences; while the Bible lies quietly on the shelf, to be *looked at morning and evening*. If you take your stand by the closet, you will notice that most professors will enter there, probably, but once a day; and the devotions will indicate, that a sense of duty, not love, induced the visit; while others will visit the closet but once a week, which, of itself, shows the motive. If you go to the weekly prayer-meeting, in a church of three to six hundred members, even when the weather is favourable, you will rarely find more than twenty-five to fifty present; and these, mostly females; and

if you inquire the reason of the absence of so many, especially of the male members, you will probably be told that the fatigues of the day, or present business duties, prevents a more general attendance. If you go into the world, it will be difficult to find the members of Christ's body, by reason of their resemblance to the world; and if you do find them, and ask them if they have daily peace and communion with God, they will answer in the negative; and if you ask them if, when they pray for a revival of God's work, or for other blessings they expect to receive, they will answer no; and if you ask them if they are really and truly consecrated to God, with a little hesitation, they will again say no; and if you ask them if they should be, without hesitation, they will say yes. The truth is, they serve God reluctantly, and are not impelled by love, but present unwilling offerings. There is no heart in their services; for the Spirit leads where there is a desire to be led; and when He retires, duties become crosses.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE, AND THE POWER OF MONEY.

If on the Sabbath, when seated in God's house, listening to a faithful exhibition of His truth, on the subject of Sabbath observance, you

hear the screeching whistle of the steam engine, sounding its defiant notes, and proclaiming heaven daring acts of rebellion against the authority of the great Jehovah; you are reminded that such acts are jointly produced, by the money of the professed friend, and the real and open enemy of God; and if in your simplicity, you ask how such acts are permitted under such preaching, the answer will be, that it would disturb the peace and harmony that prevails to deal with such cases; therefore, they are tolerated; and the professed followers of the Lamb, many of them office-bearers in His Church, *deliberately*, *constantly*, and *unmolestedly*, continue to send forth their trains and steamers on God's holy day. Money laughs at discipline; rules in God's house; tramples upon His commands; and loads His church with sins that drag souls down to hell.

SAD CONDITION OF THE CHURCHES.

SUCH seems to be the condition of the Churches. There is but little prevailing prayer, little self-denial, little faith, and but little fruit. There is the form of prayer, but the spirit and power are wanting; and when men ask, *they do not expect to receive.* Groans and lamentations are heard on every side; and instead of victories through faith, there are defeats through fear and unbe-

lief; and the cry, "O wretched man that I am," is pertinaciously adhered to, where there should be the song, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." There seems to be a disposition to rely on policy, to the exclusion of the Spirit; and to manœuvre men into heaven, rather than to pray them there. There is an evident "corruption from the simplicity that is in Christ." Men are dropping into eternity, who for years have been listening to such prayers, and for whose salvation no adequate efforts had been made; and God's own people will take part in placing their bodies in the earth, believing their souls to have been ushered, unprepared, into the presence of their Maker; and not only be unmoved, but return to their avocations as they would from any ordinary duty; when, perhaps, the departed one was a neighbour to whom the warning, entreating voice had never been raised. They do not say, nor mean, "Am I my brother's keeper," but they do mean that such is the custom of the Church; that others do as they have done; and propped up by such a slender support, they go on thinking, "to-morrow shall be as this day." In some places, generation after generation rises up and passes away, while the Church proceeds on in the even tenor of her way, without being the

instrument of the salvation of one or but few souls. If there be outward peace and tranquillity, if agitating subjects are kept out, and unity and concord prevails within; though that concord results from slothfulness, and tends to death; it would seem, that if there was not satisfaction, there was not, at least, a desire for a revival sufficiently strong to disturb the general harmony which prevails; as revivals not only sift members, that they which are approved may be known, but ruffles the outward surface, as well as the inward man. Indeed, revivals are not expected or laboured for, except in the distance. There is not an expectation of present results. In warm weather, men are too much engaged in secular pursuits to attend especially to the things of eternity; and in the winter, lectures, visiting, &c., crowd out special efforts; and thus, the year passes away without a revival, and men go down to hell from the very vestibule of the Church. Ordinarily, the result corresponds with our faith and works; and if these put off descending mercies to an unknown, distant future, the result will not be different from our expectation. If we are willing to remain lifeless, and let souls perish, the result will correspond with our faith. God's time is now; and harvest work is present labour, looking to present results.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE PRESENT LOW STATE OF PIETY?

SUCH being the condition of the Churches, the question arises, What is the cause of such a state of things? Why is it, that the Gospel, when committed to such hands, is not more generally a savour of life? Why do Ministers preach Christ for a life time, in some instances, with no apparent good results? Why do Christians continue to pray for years, for the salvation of souls, without obtaining their requests? Why is there so little self-denial, and so much conformity to the world among the professed followers of Christ? There must be a radical defect somewhere, or the Gospel is not what we have been taught to believe it is. If, by the "foolishness of preaching," men are converted, and our preaching does not produce this result, there is a fault somewhere. Doubtless, there are many defects, and different individuals may find them in various places, and under different aspects; and believing they are not so difficult to find as to forbid inquiry, I will endeavour to point out a few of them, hoping that what I may fail in bringing to view, others may be induced to notice.

THERE IS A WANT OF CONSECRATION.

It appears to me that the first, and most formidable defect, the one which underlies and overrides all others, and which in a measure is made responsible for some others, is to be found in the fact, that the Christians of this day, are not *fully* and *wholly* consecrated to the service of their Master. I never yet found a Christian who did not admit this duty; yet but few by their works acknowledge, or in their lives give evidence, of its faithful discharge; while they know that if they are not wholly given up to the service and will of God, they are deliberately, constantly, and consciously withholding from Him, what He demands. This is a serious charge,—yet solemn truth; and from it there is no escape. The command is to Christians, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing;* and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." That this means consecration, is evident from the following verse, which says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Having consecrated ourselves, we are then required, by faith in the promises to receive us, and to become our Father, to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness." Again, the Apostle says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." And yet again, we are commanded that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, the glory of God should be the object.

WHEN WE ARE ON PROMISED GROUND.

THE truth is, we are not on promised ground, until this solemn consecration is made; for it is only on condition that we do thus come out from the world, that the promise is to receive us; and it is when, and *only* when, we seek God with *all* the heart, that He will be found of us. God is the Father of all converted persons; but becomes especially so, and in a peculiar manner, "dwells in" us, and "walks in" us, and "puts His law" in our "minds," and "writes it" in our "hearts," when fully consecrated to His service and will.

INDIFFERENCE TO THE DUTY OF CONSECRATION.

If you ask the members of your Church, if they are wholly given up to God, they will say, No; and strange as it may seem, they will appear to regard it of but little moment; when in truth, it is the foundation stone, under God, of the human superstructure to faith, love, and obedience. Is it to be wondered at that such Christians do not prevail in prayer, or enjoy communion with their God? Nay, is it not a wonder that the Lord's forbearance and long-suffering do not cease, and "judgment and justice assume the habitation of His throne?" I know I ought to be a wholly consecrated Christian, that I ought to be a living sacrifice, that I ought to do all things with a view to the glory of God; yet I do not, neither do I seriously attempt it, or sorrow at my neglect of these duties; and then I think it strange, that I do not have liberty in prayer, and communion with the Father of lights. I look at the Bible, and find the command is explicit, and the promise, that "I can do all things through Christ;" and then I look at my neighbours, especially the Ministers, the leaders and teachers of God's children, and beholding almost every-

where, a palpable neglect of this solemn duty, I say, "Go thy way for this time;" when I have a more suitable opportunity, when afflictions come, or death approaches, I will then attend to this matter. Are such professors "living epistles?" Can there be an intimate communion between such souls and their God?

APATHY ON QUESTIONS OF MORAL REFORM—THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

THERE is apathy on, if not opposition to, questions of moral reform. Temperance had to fight its way into the Church, over the broken bodies and ruined souls of many within her folds; and its tenure there, even now, is precarious and uncertain. The cry was, "Peace! peace!" while the world was swimming into perdition, and the Church spotted all over with the contagion. Liquor robbed, murdered, made paupers, ruined families, destroyed souls, and demanded taxes; but the Church was slow to see it; and even now, members in good standing continue the traffic in the poison: and if they do not fall on their knees, and ask the blessing of Heaven on their sales, they place in the treasury of the Lord the avails thereof.

THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF SLAVERY.

SLAVERY, which forbids men to read God's word,—imprisons helpless women for teaching children to read the Bible;—that forces millions into fornication,—that chattelizes the man, and the faith, and love, and spirit of prayer in the Christian, had to walk into the Senate, and substitute the club for argument; and murder, and scalp, and violate women on the plains of Kansas, in carrying out its schemes for subduing freedom, before the Ministry and the Church could see danger, or apprehend duty; and when slavery forced freedom into a compact to turn the hungry and naked from the doors of Christ's followers, Ministers could take the day set apart for thanksgiving for liberty and other blessings, and use Christ's pulpits to preach obedience to such a law. O, was not that a strange sight indeed? and if it caused Christendom to mourn, how must it have been regarded in Heaven?

THERE IS RESPECT OF PERSONS.

ANOTHER defect is to be found in the fact, that there is respect of persons. Let your eyes rest upon the pew seater, as he directs to a seat the stranger. Though a dull man, yet by reason of experience, his practised eye, at a glance,

takes the measure of the new-comer; and he is placed in that position, by common acquiescence, if not consent, allotted to his quality of cloth, with as much precision as the bill-holder classes his number one, two, and three bills. The cloth, aided by certain attention to dress, and not worth or age, guides the man who does the bidding of the Church. The gold ring gets a good seat; while the humble follower of Jesus, even him whose "hoary head is a crown of glory," and whose "face" we should "honour," whose blessing consists in a clean heart, and meetness for his Master's presence, is placed in *his* allotted seat. Money takes precedence in God's house, over grace; and he to whom the Lord has given silver and gold, sits above him to whom He has given faith that shakes kingdoms, and gives direction to events. Now for one moment let us listen to the Lord's commentary on such acts: "If there come into your assembly, a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel; and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, 'Sit thou here in a good place;' and say to the poor, 'Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool;' are ye not then partial in yourselves. If ye have

respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law, as transgressors." It would be difficult to find language in which more plainly and pointedly to condemn such conduct; and yet, with these words before them, and as they fall from ministerial lips, in God's own house, and on His holy Sabbath, these commands are *habitually* disregarded by the Lord's own people. It will not do to say, that this is a small matter, and does but little injury; for it is not so small as to have escaped the eye of Omniscience, or too trivial to have prevented specific directions being given; and will not escape the same Omniscient eye at the judgment; for He who hath said that He "regardeth not the rich more than the poor," will not hold them guiltless who do so.

MONEY RULES THE CHURCHES: OR, THE POOR WISE MAN.

MONEY, to a considerable extent, rules the Churches. The men who fill the offices, and give tone to public sentiment, both in things spiritual and temporal, are the possessors of money. They may, or may not, have much piety; if there is a tolerably correct outward walk, with money, the way is open for preferment, and weight and influence in council. The

poor wise man is still unnoticed. He may, by his prayers, prevent the judgments of heaven from descending upon a graceless Church, and agonize in his closet until mercies descend; and when he enters his Father's house, he cheerfully takes the humble position assigned him by the will of those who control God's house. The eyes of his brethren are not upon him; but he is as dear to his Father as the apple of His eye. He is not consulted on matters pertaining to the interests of Zion; yet the Holy Ghost is his teacher; and when refreshings are approaching, he is the first to see and improve them.

THE POOR RICH MAN: OR, THE WEAK STRONG MAN.

When I first entered the Church, I found such a brother in it; and I very soon learned to appreciate his worth; and my eyes would watch the door to catch a glance of his happy face, as he approached the place of prayer; and, somehow, I always wanted a seat by his side. He was an uncommonly plain looking person, and very poor, but mighty before God in prayer. Twenty years have since rolled away, and still I hear that voice, and listen to those earnest cries. It was difficult to resist the impression that God was very near to him; and yet, he would no

more have been consulted as to the propriety of extra meetings, or on any point purely spiritual, than he would have been asked for a hundred dollars towards the Minister's salary. Such cases may be rare; but if it be so, it is because of the absence of such piety, and not the influence of money.

UP TOWN CHURCHES, AND DOWN TOWN DESTITUTION.

THE simplicity of the Gospel is well nigh lost. Look at the style and expense of many of our Churches. Enter them, and note the provision there made for the poor. Visit the "up town" Churches in New York; and then roam amidst the "down town" destitution; and remember, that "to the poor the Gospel is preached." When, where, and how, can these multitudes hear the Gospel? They cannot pay to hear it; and they could not enter the Sabbath abodes of the rich, even if permitted. Silver and gold they have not; but they have souls that must live for ever; and who cares for those souls? Is it the occupants of the "up town" pulpits and slips? Is the Gospel preached to the poor in the city of New York? Yet the "up town" religious power, exerts a controlling influence in our land; and have, perhaps, as

much piety, as the "up town" professors in other places.

SIMPLICITY OF FAITH, AND ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

THE simplicity of faith is but little seen. Christians live by faith; yet how seldom is it exercised. Men pray, but not in faith. They do not expect answers to their prayers, in most instances. Indeed, answers would astonish, if not frighten, many suppliants; yet the Lord does nothing for the Christian, but in answer to the prayer of faith; for being "children of the promise," they have by promise, what others have by common providence. Using a form of prayer, without faith, will no more obtain mercies than did the cries of the priests of Baal bring fire in the presence of Elijah. Christians are exhorted to exercise faith, but in too general terms. Faith rests only on God's word; and if on that, on particular commands, or promises, requiring specific and appropriating faith. Man "lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord;" and if by the word, by faith in particular, specific promises. Faith is a present act, having reference to this moment. We cannot lay in a stock of grace in the morning, for the day; but must live by the moment.

MAMMON WORSHIPPERS.

MAMMON is worshipped in temples erected to the praise of the Triune-God. Fashion, display, and position too often take the place of love, faith, and meekness. The salvation of souls seems to be the exception; and formality the rule. The glory of God is not unfrequently sought through style, wealth, and ostentatious display. How unlike Jesus of Nazareth! Not a place to lay His head, in a world made by Himself! "Despised and rejected of men!" Lowly, Omnipotent Saviour! What would be Thy reception in a modern fashionable Church? How many would recognise Thy character, or acknowledge Thy claims? Where would be Thy allotted seat? How would the absence of gold and fine apparel affect Thy reception?

HOARDING TO PERPETUATE A NAME.

HOARDING, is another practice which tends to dry up the sources of spiritual blessings. Hoarding has a broad signification in spiritual matters. It is not alone the man who hoards, for the sake of the money; but the man who lays by the thousands, to leave to thriftless children, while men are perishing for the lack of vision; and this is not only tolerated, but practically encouraged, in the Church. A man is left, if not

taught, to believe he is doing pretty well, nay, liberally, if he gives to the Lord the hundreds, and retains for himself the thousands, to be distributed at death to children, without regard to character. The Lord has blessed my labours, and given me more than sufficient for my wants and comforts. I look out upon the world, and see men everywhere passing to the judgment, unprepared to meet their God, because no man responded to the cry, "Come over and help us." I know my money would send out light, and save souls; and I know too, that one soul is of more value than the whole world; yet I want the character of a rich man, and my children to be known as the children of a rich father, and to enjoy luxuries their talents or industry may not secure; therefore, I will lay by the most of what the Lord shall give me for these purposes; and really! "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cannot I do what I will with my own? Can I not add farm to farm, stock to stock, and call my lands by my own name? Yes, verily, thou mayest; yet "remember that for all these *things* God will bring thee into judgment." The men who reason and act thus, in many instances, control our Churches; and to question their right thus to reason and act, would be regarded as savouring of bigotry and uncharitableness.

Christians are not taught to really hold their possessions as stewards. There is such a theory, and it often falls from ministerial lips; but where is the fruit of such preaching? The rule is the opposite; while the few noble exceptions, stand out as marks of wonder to men, and joy to angels.

THERE IS WANT OF DISCIPLINE.

THERE is great laxity on the subject of discipline. Numbers are permitted to live for months, if not years, without molestation, in sins requiring the attention of the Church; and such individual sins, by reason of this neglect, at length become the sins of the Church. Christ has clothed His Church with power to deal with offenders, and vindicate His honour; nay, He commands it; yet, vast multitudes are living in a state demanding proceedings; and which, if taken in the Spirit of Christ, would be restored to happiness and usefulness. The neglect of discipline is not only a sin, but a gross wrong to the offending party; for when there is the image of Christ, though terribly marred, disciplinary measures, taken in obedience to the command, will be followed by repentance, confession, peace, and usefulness. True, it may sometimes be difficult to "cast the first stone;"

yet if "Christ be left alone," the command remains, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbour." Churches are loaded down with individual, unrebuked sins; and thus there is a double impediment in the way of receiving blessings. The individual's hands are tied, for he has no power in prayer; and the Church is powerless, because she "hast them that hold the doctrine which I hate." Ministers preach, and members pray, but there are no indications that blessings are about to descend; and then they wonder why their prayers are not answered; while the wonder should be, why they have not prayed and acted differently. Judgment must begin at the house of God; and if His people would witness a return of their Lord's presence, they must first prepare the way by removing what "He hates." "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."

THERE IS BUT LITTLE PERSONAL LABOUR FOR CHRIST.

ANOTHER defect is to be found in the fact, that there is but little personal labour for Christ. Some give money, and then fold their arms; while others give but little money, and no personal labour; indeed, most professors do not

give much personal labour for Christ; and this is a serious defect; for while in vineyard work, each has his particular sphere of duty, yet Christ demands the personal services of all His followers. Christians are preachers and teachers; and are commanded to *go* and labour. A man may give all his goods to send the Gospel throughout the world, yet if he does not labour personally to win souls to Christ, he does not obey the command. Wherever we are, in God's order, whether in the shop, office, or field, there we are to labour for Christ. Men, bound with us to the judgment, meet us at every step; and we are not obliged to go to heathen lands, or distant parts of our own to find a field; for behold! the "fields are white already to the harvest," all around us. We must entreat, as well as pray; and warn, as well as give money. At the judgment, the plea that we have sent missionaries to the heathen, will not excuse for the blood of our neighbours' souls.

WITNESSING FOR JESUS IS DISCOURAGED.

AGAIN, is the teaching and practice of the Church in accordance with God's word, on the subject of witnessing for Jesus; or the relation, or confession of our experience to our brethren? In most Churches, the relation of personal ex-

perience is discouraged, if not unknown; and the members of the same Church, will not know each others' experience for years; and is this scriptural? The Lord declares that Christians are His witnesses; and the Psalmist calls upon God's people to hear what the Lord has done for his soul; and the Prophet says that they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and Christ commanded the man out of whom He cast the legion of devils, to go home and tell his friends what great things the Lord had done for him; and St. Paul thanked his God, and prayed that the communication of Philemon's faith, might become effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing which was in him in Christ Jesus.

THE CHARACTER OF A CONFESSION FOR JESUS.

Is it not true, that a proper statement of what God has done in, for, and through us, not only honours the Saviour, but quickens souls, not excluding our own? A testimony for Jesus, so far from tending to pride or complacency, promotes humility and love. If I confess to the reception of the grace of faith or patience, it is ordinarily in connexion with some trial, where these graces have been conspicuous; which not

only ascribes all the glory to Christ, but in doing this, necessarily acknowledges my own unworthiness and inability; for "boasting is excluded, not by the law of works, but by the law of love;" and thus "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith." It is true, there is danger of formal confessions, which do not honour the Saviour; and so there is formality encountered in the discharge of other duties. As Christians, we are under obligation to testify from personal experience, that we know that whatever the Bible affirms of Christian experience, is true. If it be said, "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them," or that "thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee," Christians are under infinite obligations to testify that they know from personal experience, that this is true; and such testimony honours Christ, and encourages others to trust in Him for similar blessings. To say that *if* I should trust Christ, He would do this or that, is not testimony for Jesus, but supposition; and such as all men can make. It is not a "profession of our faith;" but trifling with eternal interests, and the "Judge of the quick and the dead." There may be testimonies unlike practice; if so, we elsewhere meet with the same inconsistencies;

and yet, it is no reason if others do dishonour Christ by their lives, while they draw nigh with their lips, why I should not honour Him, both in life and profession. Let us listen a moment to what some good and great men have said on this subject.

WHAT GOOD MEN HAVE SAID ABOUT WITNESSING FOR JESUS.

MATTHEW HENRY said, "What God has *wrought in* our souls, as well as for them, we must declare to others." Again, "the Psalmist calls upon Christians to hear him declare what God had done for his soul, not in a spirit of vain glory, but for the glory of God. God's people should communicate their experiences to each other; we should take all occasions to tell one another the great and kind things God hath done for us, especially our souls, the spiritual blessings; and these we should be most affected with ourselves, and with these we should endeavour to affect others." Dr. Scott said, "Every servant of God is a witness for Him; and they all can give such an account of what He has wrought in them, shown to them, and done for them, as to lead others to know, believe, and understand His power, truth, and love; and the help which He sends in answer to their

prayers, enables them to testify that He never faileth those who trust in Him."

Latimer said, in speaking of the relation of Bilney's experience, which was so remarkably blessed to his conversion, "I learnt more by this confession, than by much reading, and in many years." John Wesley said, "a general temptation now, is the denying what God hath wrought."

Bishop Gobat, in a public address, recently delivered in London, in speaking of the fact, that the Jewish converts at Jerusalem, had of their own accord, established weekly social meetings, one prominent feature of which, was the relation of personal experience, remarked that "he had noticed a sensible improvement in their spirituality, as the result."

SUBSTITUTION OF DOUBTS AND FEARS, FOR FAITH AND LOVE.

In some branches of the Church, members are frowned upon, who speak of sins forgiven, and present acceptance with God. To say, "I know whom I have believed," is regarded as presumptuous; while to doubt of my acceptance, through Christ, is evidence of humility; and, strange to say, even of my acceptance and Sonship. The Christian "lives," "stands," and "walks,"

by faith; yet to say I believe my sins are forgiven, is presumptuous; while to say, I have doubt of this, is evidence that I am forgiven, that I do believe. Doubt is put for faith, and darkness for light. God requires me to believe His word, which promises forgiveness, as a condition of being forgiven; yet I doubt that word; and this doubt, is regarded as evidence that I do believe, that I am forgiven. Salvation is made to depend, not on faith, but the opposite; not on a belief in the veracity of God, but the want of it. President Edwards said, "It is manifest that it was a common thing for saints that we have a history, or particular account of in the Scriptures, to be assured;" but much of modern theology wishes to substitute doubts and fears, for faith and light; and to keep those in bondage, whom Christ has made free. The Lord says, that "without faith" I "cannot please God;" yet to say I have faith in God's word that my sins are forgiven, is presumptuous. It is rash and presumptuous to believe that God does just what He has promised to do; but praiseworthy to doubt that word. This is really what such theology teaches; though far from the thoughts of many who teach it.

THE PRESENT STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN ATTAINMENT IS TOO LOW.

It seems to me, that the present standard of Christian attainment dishonours Christ. He has made provision for high attainment, and not only commands it, but promises to bestow it, upon the simple condition of the humble prayer of faith. Christians know their present attainment brings but little peace to themselves, or good to others; and yet, there they stand with folded arms, and saddened countenance, exclaiming, "O wretched men that we are!" Christ stands by them saying, "This is the way," but they heed Him not; and then in mercy He sends judgments; and while the chastening is upon them, there is a partial turning unto the Lord; but soon the judgment is forgotten, and again they stand shivering in the cold, praying without being heard, and mourning less for their sins, and the absence of their Lord, than for the joys He gives. They know the joy of the Lord is their strength; yet their moans speak of low attainments, enfeebled efforts, and separation from God. They cannot say from present experience, that the Lord is faithful to His promise, to keep them in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Him.

THE PRESENT STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN ATTAINMENT IS NOT ATTRACTIVE TO THE WORLD.

MEN know what God commands and promises, but do not see it exhibited in the lives of His professed followers; and are thus led to doubt the word, or to regard professions as hypocritical. Christ declares He is able to save unto the uttermost, but His followers in their lives, if not professions, deny this; or what is practically the same thing, in theory place the attainment so high, or surround it with so much mystery, that honest souls are disheartened, and do not attempt to secure such a blessing,—forgetting that it is Christ who saves, not man; and that He is as able to save wholly, as partially; as able to sanctify, as to justify; and as willing, as able; and as faithful, as He is able.

EFFECTS OF DENOMINATIONAL CONTROVERSIES.

DENOMINATIONAL controversies and personal warfares, exhaust much of the energies of the Church. There is a spirit at work, which seeks to plant names, creed, and particular views in advance of others. The Church is not one in effort, if in design. Points not essential to sal-

vation receive too much attention, while souls are perishing for the want of vision. The salvation of souls, which is a present work, is neglected, that we may do battle against an opponent, who entertains but slightly different views on some comparatively trivial point, universally acknowledged to be non-essential. The cry is, "We must be valiant for the truth, we must enlarge our 'tents,'" while men all around us are stretching forth their hands, crying, "Come over and help us." If we have been able to silence an opponent, or "strengthen our stakes," there is complacency, even though thoughts of lost souls do now and then present themselves to our minds. The great business of the Christian—the salvation of souls—is not pursued as he pursues other objects. Ministers will often spend days, perhaps weeks, in the preparation of doctrinal discourses, to the neglect of the more important and direct work of saving souls. It is not but that doctrinal sermons should be occasionally preached, but that much of the real strength of the Church is spent in reconnoitring,—not the outposts of the *enemy*,—but the *friends* of God; not so much in promoting godliness, as in successfully competing with the friends of God in "lengthening cords."

A SECTARIAN SPIRIT INTERFERES WITH SALVATION.

THERE is a sectarian spirit pervading the Churches, which is as unseemly, as it is unfruitful. It is uncharitable, full of prejudice, unwilling to admit others are good, or do good. It is exclusive, regarding our denomination as always right; and others often, if not mostly, wrong. If you speak of the Lord's presence with others, it is very easy to be mistaken, especially when errors exist on many points. If you point to evident trophies of grace, Satan himself shines at times. How much of this spirit is to be found in the Churches! How dishonouring to God, and how chilling in its influences! If you go amongst the Arminians and Calvinists, or other divisions in Christ's household, you will often find this spirit magnified into formidable impediments in the way of salvation; and in vain you may point to the evident tokens of God's presence in each, for the eyes are shut against such evidence, and there will at once be a resort to distinctive peculiarities; and cruel, uncharitable, and often exceedingly offensive remarks, will fall from the lips of the Lord's own children.

WHOM GOD HONOURS, WE SHOULD BE SLOW TO DISPARAGE.

THERE is something peculiarly offensive in this spirit; for while our doctrinal views should be firmly settled, this should not prevent even pleasure in the society of those who may, on some points, differ with us. The question is, does the image of the Saviour appear? and where this is found, minor points of difference should not create suspicions or diminish confidence; for whom the Lord honours, we should be slow to disparage; and when a denomination is evidently blessed and honoured of God, it does not become us to denounce them, though on some minor points we may think them in an error. If they were fundamentally so, God's presence would not go with them; for, "wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not that Thou goest with us?"

THE ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF PIETY IS PLACED TOO LOW.

MEN do not ordinarily reach a higher point than the one aimed at, even as water rises not above its source. Practically, the standard reached, is no higher than the one aimed at; and what that

is, we have seen in looking at the present condition of the Churches. The advocates of a full salvation in a tone indicating sorrow, if not taunt, say that men are taught to believe that they will, if not must, sin daily, in thought, word, and deed; and to speak of sins forgiven, and a sense of present acceptance with God, is discouraged as tending to boasting, pride, and a pharisaical spirit; while, to speak in doubtful terms of our salvation, if not scriptural, is yet evidencing a humble spirit, and therefore commendable. That men are taught to pray to be made holy, to believe provision has been made for them to be holy, and yet they are told that they cannot be holy; that is, live without known, voluntary transgression. No line short of a full salvation is pointed out which they may expect to reach; nor is the number or kind of sins they may or shall commit defined. The language, "O wretched man that I am," is to be their cry till they reach Jordan; and then as they are about to leave this world, where holiness is necessary to usefulness, they are made holy.

A LOW STANDARD OF PIETY INSURES AN INEFFICIENT CHURCH.

But, if all this be true, they ask, is not the standard which is attainable considerably higher

than the one now reached? Indeed, does not the fact that, happily, God has witnesses on earth to higher attainment, settle the question that the present general standard is far too low; and if this be so, where does the responsibility rest for the present low standard? To this, the reply is, that it mainly rests with the Ministry; but whether this be so or not, is not the present standard too low? And in this, is there not found a sufficient cause for the present condition of the Churches? The people want holiness, and the Lord has promised it. They sigh to be filled with righteousness, and the Lord has promised this; but the Church, if they do not deny its attainability, place it so high, as practically to be beyond the reach of the mass of Christians. The sighing, seeking child of God goes to his Bible, and finds the command to be holy, the promise he shall be holy, and the prayers of inspired men that he might be holy; but when he enters the Church, he is taught he cannot be holy, that is, live without voluntary transgression. He is taught he can be very spiritual, and live very near to God; but he cannot, or will not, live without voluntary transgression.

WHAT THE ADVOCATES OF A FULL SALVATION BELIEVE.

THE advocates of a full salvation do not admit that this is the scriptural view of the subject, but allege that Christ is able and willing to save unto the uttermost, that is, that provision has been made to be saved from voluntary transgression; and that such a salvation is within the reach of all who will fully and wholly consecrate themselves to God, and trust in His word to be cleansed from all sin, and thus moment by moment to keep the offering upon the altar, and trust in Christ to be wholly saved. They say that the man who never thus consecrated himself, and thus trusted in God's word for a full salvation, is no more competent to testify against the doctrine of a full salvation, than would be the man who never trusted in Christ for justifying grace, that there is no remission of sins through the blood of the Lamb.

OPINIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS FOUNDED ON GOD'S WORD, FROM A PERSONAL EXAMINATION.

THE truth is, that the opinions of many in the Church, on such points, are not founded upon the word of God, from a careful, prayerful,

personal investigation; but on the belief or tradition of the Church to which, on conversion, they go; and although these opinions may, and doubtless are, in most instances correct; yet the tendency and influence of such a course is disastrous to the individual, and dishonouring to God. Such persons enter the Church, in many instances, with very confused views on many points of doctrine and practice; and as different points are brought to their notice, without investigation, they embrace the popular opinion, and run with the multitude; and at once begin to defend the opinions, and seek not after truth, but arguments, to fortify and sustain their positions. How dishonouring to God is such a course! The Bible is simply a history of things revealed to man, until the Spirit makes it a revelation; and this He ordinarily does only when there is humility, a teachable spirit, and earnest, protracted prayer, with a desire to know the truth, that it may be obeyed. On such points as the one under consideration, how few adopt this course; and yet will vehemently denounce all who entertain opinions different from themselves. This is not the part of wisdom, nor the path of safety.

HAS THE CHURCH ERRED ON THE SUBJECT OF A FULL SALVATION?

PERMIT me to ask, in this connexion, whether the Church has not somewhat erred, on the subject of Christian perfection, in these latter times; if not on the main point in controversy, the possibility of living without voluntary transgression; at least in the attempts that have been made to suppress opinions, the strange, if not tyrannical acts of excommunication, the ecclesiastical censures, and the war with the followers of the Lamb on the subject, in heathen lands. Some of these acts made a profound impression on many minds, impressions which the lapse of years does not efface; and as one of them, for particular reasons, made a deep impression on my own mind, you will pardon me for briefly alluding to it.

THE MISSIONARY IN AN "UPPER ROOM" PRAYER-MEETING.

IT is now some years since, being in one of our large cities, I went one afternoon to an "upper room" in one of the streets of that city, to a meeting for prayer and conference. There were a few persons present, and as they one after another led in prayer, or spoke of the

goodness of God to them, the Holy Ghost seemed to fill the room. I was a stranger to all, but my attention was soon drawn to an individual who sat near me, who, from his attitude and bearing, was evidently most deeply interested in the meeting; and as the meeting progressed, and increased in interest, he would unconsciously move his chair a little nearer to the part of the room occupied by those taking part in the meeting. I never before saw such evidence of deep, absorbing feeling. The tears kept trickling down his manly, sun-burnt cheeks, yet he did not seem to know it, but leaned forward with his hands resting on his knees, drinking in every word that was uttered. My own interest in the meeting was considerably lessened, in watching this brother. At length, that manly bosom seemed incapable of longer holding the deep feelings that had been aroused within, and out of the fulness of the heart, the mouth spoke. In a peculiarly modest and solemn manner, he proceeded to speak of the pleasure he experienced in being present in such a place, and the great interest he felt in what had been said; and then stated that he was a Missionary to the heathen, on the other side of the globe, where he had for many years resided, and from whence he had but just returned; and

added, that he felt more deeply than he could express, the privilege of being in such a meeting, where the Lord was so manifestly present. I left the meeting without learning the name of the brother, but I felt quite sure I should recognise him, when we meet in the other world. I was deeply interested in him, for "my soul was knit with his soul," and a knowledge of the fact that he had dedicated the life God had given him, to His service among the heathen, did not diminish my love for him; nor does the remembrance of those tears, lessen my respect for the man. The Missionary wept; and his tears of joy I could not but think were "put into the Lord's bottle," when entered "in His book," even with those which flow from a contrite spirit.

THE MISSIONARY IN DISREPUTE WITH HIS BRETHREN.

SOME few months after this, I noticed a short paragraph in a periodical, to the effect that two Missionaries among the Heathen in a distant part of the world, had been dismissed from their connexion with their Missionary Board, on account of their views on Christian perfection; and learning that my unknown, but loved brother of the upper room, was one of the two

alluded to, I procured a statement of their views, to see what heresy such a brother had embraced, that should induce such a Board, to dismiss him from such a field of labour; and that you may see what was the cause of so important a step, I will give you in a few words, the views of these brethren on the subject of holy living; with the simple remark, that in their letters of dismission, they were assured, that apart from their views on Christian perfection, they were highly regarded; and but for this "doctrinal error" would gladly have been retained.

WHY THE MISSIONARY WAS IN DISREPUTE AMONG HIS BRETHREN.

One of these Missionaries states, that he never entertained the idea that he had attained to a sinless state, or that others had, or would; but held that this could not be proved; and that he had a deeper sense of his depravity since he had entertained the views complained of, than ever before. That he never expected to attain to that state, in which he should be able to say, that he knew, or believed, he lived without sin; but that all men should ask to be searched and cleansed from secret faults, and should watch, pray, and strive.

But he did believe, that the provisions of

grace were sufficient to authorize the Christian to look to Christ for aid, to enable him to do all the will of God; or to love God with all his heart; consequently, he did not set aside the grace of Christ; or our dependence on that grace. He believed it could not be proved to be true, that "no man is able, either by himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commands of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed;" and that while he did not teach that any had, or would attain, in this life, to a state of entire and continued exemption from sin, to affirm the converse, was going beyond scriptural authority.

The other brother held, that while he had not taught that any man had in this life kept the commands of God perfectly, he did teach, that the provisions of grace were such as to authorize all Christians to hope and expect, *through Christ*, to do, daily, all God commands them; all He requires them to purpose, or resolve, or endeavour, or aim, or try to do; all He requires them to pledge themselves to do; all He has taught them to ask for grace to do; and all He requires them to exercise faith in Him to help them to do.

CASTE, BIGAMY, AND SLAVERY, IN CHRIST'S HOUSEHOLD.

THUS two valuable Missionaries, after having mastered the language of the people among whom they laboured, and were prepared for great usefulness, were thrust out from their labours, as unfit to teach the Heathen that there was salvation through Jesus, because they believed the grace of Christ was sufficient to enable them to do all that the Lord required of them; while the same Board, (I quote from memory,) at the same time, had Churches in other lands, in which were caste and bigamy; and in our own, slaveholding; and where the laws of the slaveholders forbid the Missionaries to teach the slaves to read God's word, or suffer them to sing praises to their Saviour, before their masters. The Board planted and sustained Churches, where the laws forbid God's word to His creatures, and where plurality of wives was tolerated; but could not permit their Missionaries to teach men they could do, through Christ, what their Maker required of them.

THE TROUBLES OF THE SIMPLE MINDED.

To one not learned, but who honestly wishes to obey God, such teaching and practice seem

strange and unaccountable. How it is right to tolerate a disregard of God's law in one instance, or wrong to hold we can, through Christ, obey it in another, a simple minded man finds it difficult to understand. He can comprehend how that Jesus, wielding all power in heaven and earth, "is able to save unto the uttermost;" seeing "He ever liveth to make intercession," for His people; for that is affirmed in God's word; but he cannot see now it is right in any way to give countenance to laws that allow a man two wives, or suffers him to keep the word of life from any of God's creatures, and not permit him to sing praises to his Redeemer; for this is not affirmed in Christ's Gospel. How would one untrammelled by the traditions of men, understand these things, from the word of God, as on his knees, he sought for light at the mercy seat?

THE VIEWS OF THE ADVOCATES OF A FULL SALVATION.

But what is the doctrine taught by these Missionaries, and others of this day, on the subject of Christian perfection, or entire sanctification? I feel my incapacity to speak in the behalf of such individuals, and on such a subject, and to such a brother as I am address-

ing; but I will venture, in a very brief manner, to notice some of the points made by the advocates of a full salvation; and if I should do them injustice, or the cause they advocate harm, I shall deeply regret it. At all events, they are not responsible for what I shall say, whether it be in accordance with their views or not; as I do not belong to any particular school of the Prophets on this subject.

WHAT THE ADVOCATES OF A FULL SALVATION DO NOT TEACH.

WHAT, then, do they teach? They teach, in the first place, that there is no sinless perfection in this life. That entire sanctification is not absolute perfection; as that only belongs to God. It is not angelic perfection; as that only belongs to beings who have never sinned. It is not Adamic perfection; as that only belongs to him who was created holy. Neither is it every kind of relative perfection. It is not the perfection St. Paul alludes to when he says, "Not as though I had already attained, neither was already perfect;" as that doubtless refers to the perfection he hoped to attain to in the resurrection; but that perfection which he describes when he says, "Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded;" and "herein

do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men." It is not the perfection of the Christian as a *man;* it is moral, not natural, perfection; the perfection of a man's Christianity; a perfection not inconsistent with human infirmities; such as unsoundness of judgment, fertility of imagination, dulness of apprehension, uncertainty of memory, imbecility of intellect, &c., and, as an inevitable result of these, numerous blunders and mistakes. It is not a perfection that places us beyond temptation; but, on the contrary, they hold that the more holy, the more we are tempted. It is not a perfection that places us beyond the possibility of falling into sin; nor does it render us independent of the atonement; but rather compels us to a momentary trust in the merits and intercession of Christ. Neither is it a holiness which is without advancement; but on the contrary, a state of grace, in which the most rapid growth is secured; as the more holy we are, the more rapid is our growth in holiness.

WHAT THE ADVOCATES OF A FULL SALVATION, DO TEACH.

We thus see what they do not believe; and now let us look for a moment at what they do believe. They believe and teach, that we are commanded to be, and can be, as holy in our sphere, as God is in His; that through Christ, provision has been made for a full salvation from known, voluntary transgression; and that this salvation is attainable to all who will wholly consecrate themselves to the will and service of God; who will believe God's word that He accepts the offering thus presented through Christ, and thus "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit;" and who being thus cleansed, will continue to trust in Christ to be kept from sin; and thus live a life of faith upon the Son of God. They hold there is no available faith without such consecration; and even with such consecration, there is no cleansing from all unrighteousness, until there is faith in God's word, that He accepts the offering and cleanses them; and even when thus cleansed, they are obliged to obey the command, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him;" that is, each successive moment of their pilgrimage,

they are obliged to live in that same state of consecration, and belief in its acceptance, and trust in Christ for salvation from sin. They hold that while they do this, they are kept from voluntary transgression; but the moment they take the offering from off the altar, or cease "looking unto Jesus," they sink as certainly and as suddenly as did Peter; and "their eyes are opened," and "they know that they are naked."

They hold that faith is a present act, and has relation to this moment, and that the question is, "Am I now, this moment, trusting in Christ to save me 'unto the uttermost?'" That as we are to walk by faith, not sight, God's word, and not feeling, is to guide; as it is our faith, not feeling, we are commanded to profess. They hold that this freedom from sin is a state called "perfect love, entire sanctification," &c., and begins after consecration, when we believe the consecration is accepted, and when we trust in Christ to be wholly saved; and although a state, yet one we are liable to fall from, and one in which we progress, if faithful, and become more and more holy. That while it is a full-orbed holiness, plainly visible from centre to circumference, yet like the sun seen through a thick, hazy atmosphere, and which, as the atmosphere becomes purer and

clearer, shines more and more brightly; so in passing along the narrow way of faith, we become more and more like Jesus, consequently more and more holy, and shine more, as our light comes, and the glory of the Lord rises upon us, with each advancing step. That freedom from voluntary transgression is the lowest stage of entire sanctification, simply the sun seen through a hazy atmosphere; but that being "filled with all the fulness of God," is the same sun, seen through a clear atmosphere, at noon-day. They say the term "sanctification" is applied by St. Paul and others to all Christians; yet he prayed that such might be wholly sanctified. They believe that while in these bodies, at least, until the reign of universal righteousness, we are liable to mistakes in judgment, and consequently conduct; that as we form incorrect views of character, in acting on such views, our acts are wrong, though the law of love is not violated; and as our memories are not reliable, we may forget an appointment, and thus neglect a duty, but not intentionally; and yet in consequence of such defects and infirmities, and by reason of the unspeakable evil of sin, we need the atoneing blood momentarily applied; and to say, "Forgive us our trespasses."

They say the soul that knows and feels the pangs of sin, desires to be free from it, and such souls read that Jesus is a Saviour *from*, not *in* sin; that He gave Himself "to redeem us from this present evil world," and "from all iniquity;" and that through Him, we are "to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin." They read the command which is addressed to Christians, "to present their bodies living sacrifices;" and to "come out and be separate" from the world; coupled with the promises to receive such offerings; and "to cleanse them from all their filthiness;" and hating sin, and dreading its future curse, and wishing to do their Heavenly Father's will, they do, through Christ, obey these commands, and claim the promised blessings; and are enabled to say, that "after they believed, they were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise;" that they not only know "their Redeemer liveth," but that "His blood cleanseth from all unrighteousness;" for "they have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things that are freely given to them of God." They assure us, that when they do really thus consecrate themselves to God, and rest in His word to receive them, and thus honour Him by their faith; that sooner or later,

most generally very soon, He honours their act of faith by giving them the witness of the Spirit; for he "that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself;" and many of those who affirm this, are persons of exalted character, great intelligence, and undoubted veracity, whose word would not be doubted in other matters, either from want of capacity or honesty; and they speak of present, personal experience; and their "name is legion." Such is their theory, and the experience they claim under it; and they ask, if we had never heard of the doctrine of a full salvation, except through a personal examination of the Bible, should we probably feel inclined to reject such a theory? Does it become a man, they add, though he be a teacher in Israel, to denounce such a doctrine, until he has personally tested its truth? Can a man, they ask, full of prejudice against the doctrine, and not believing in the attainability of a full salvation, reasonably expect to make a fair trial? Must there not first be very great simplicity, and an honest desire to know the truth, that it may be obeyed, before the Holy Ghost becomes our teacher? They ask, did those who denounce this doctrine, ever test it in such a spirit? Are they now living in a state of entire consecration to God? If not, do

they claim the Spirit as their teacher? Can the Spirit, will the Spirit, teach self-reliant, confident hearts? Must there not be a humble, as well as a sincere heart, to be taught of God?

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT REPENTING, AND TURNING FROM SIN.

ONE of the worst features in the catalogue of defects, is to be found in the fact, that the Lord's people, when they know they have done wrong, and are now pursuing the wrong path, do not repent, and turn again to God. The commission of sin is certainly injurious enough, yet the neglect of repentance is still more ruinous. Conscience, judgment, and the word of God, tell me I have sinned, and grieved the Spirit; but I add sin to sin, by refusing to listen to these monitors; and, with a stout heart, persist in leaving undone that which I *know* I ought to do; treasuring up wrath, and taking steps which I know must be retraced. Christ calls, the Spirit woos, and the Father entreats, and still I am unmoved; forgetting the solemn words, "Thou fool." If a man ought to go east, and was going north, should on discovering his error, persist in his wrong course, acknowledging he was going wrong, and must in the end change his course, he would be regarded as unfit to

take care of himself. All this the half-hearted Christian is doing, and more; for he is offending God, grieving the Spirit, treating with contempt the Saviour, and injuring souls by his example. Not only not doing good, but doing evil; not only disobeying, but persisting in it. Men do not act thus in other relations; yet in the solemn matter of duty to God and their own souls, they persist in pursuing the wrong course, knowing it to be such. By repentance and turning from error, we escape the consequences of further rebellion; but the man who will not do this, will find in the end, that awful as is the commission of sin, more dreadful will be the consequences of not repenting and turning from it. No plea of sudden temptation will be made in such cases, for he will stand with the words written on his forehead, "He knew his Master's will, but did it not."

WHERE, AND HOW, SOME OF GOD'S PEOPLE DIE.

Some of the Lord's own people, and among them those once moving in the "higher circles," are suffered by the Church to which they belong, to spend their last days on earth in a public poor house; to die surrounded by professional servants; and leave their dying testimony for Jesus,

with His enemies; and while the agonies of dissolving nature require the sympathies of kindred spirits, the rough hand of hired service is left to minister at the gate of death; and a scene which brings Christ's angels from heaven to witness, Christ's followers on earth voluntarily absent themselves from.

THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS UNFAVOURABLE TO GROWTH IN GRACE.

OUR theological institutions, for some cause, are so detrimental to growth in grace, as to induce many parents to forego the numerous incidental advantages of such schools; and place their sons with godly Ministers of the Gospel. What a story does this statement unfold! The schools of the Prophets unfavourable to piety, and growth in holiness!

TYRANNY OF OPINION.

THERE is tyranny of opinion in the Church. Men, Ministers even, often dare not avow opinions at variance with the standard presented by their denomination; and if they should, they would be quite as likely to be disciplined, as they would for travelling on the Lord's day. On doctrines, great strictness is required; but in practice, sin is sometimes "winked at."

There is restraint on freedom of opinion, and on conscience. Honest convictions are stifled, and real opinions kept back, for fear of being regarded heretical, or of becoming "marked men;" and thus good men are forced into a state of bondage, where the praises of their fellow men are more regarded "than the praises of God;" and therefore they cannot believe; and without faith, they do not please God. The tendency of this tyranny of opinion is to keep men from investigating and thinking for themselves; and thus, that which is so justly repudiated and condemned in Romanism, is practically encouraged in Protestantism. If you go to the multitude, and question them as to the ground of their faith, you will probably be surprised to see how seldom there is a resort to "Thus saith the Lord;" and the principal reason of this is to be found in the fact, that in matters pertaining to their souls, and the glory of God, they are content to let others think for them; while in matters of dollars and cents, they think and act for themselves.

UNWILLING OFFERINGS.

CHRISTIANS are required to present perfect offerings to the Lord; yet in many instances they do not. The Lord's work, so called, is crowded into a corner, and placed last on the

list of duties for the day. Such offerings are imperfect as well as unwilling; and the Lord does not receive them, though at length their tears flood the altar. The language of the heart, and the commentary of the life is, "What a weariness is it?" "What profit is it that we have kept His ordinances?" and the "torn," and the "lame," and the "sick" are still offered unto the Lord; though He again and again assures them, He will not receive them. The offering must be in the spirit of Abel's, not Cain's; in faith and love, and not in selfishness and unbelief.

THE COVETOUS MAN UNREBUKED, BUT NOT UNHONOURED.

COVETOUSNESS, a frequently and solemnly denounced sin, one coupled with murder and theft, and declared to be idolatry, is unmolested by the Church; and the covetous man goes on grasping and hoarding, setting at defiance the authority of God; and drying up the sources of spiritual blessings unrebuked, but not unhonoured. In no branch of the Church, is this withering sin made a subject of discipline; thus deliberately setting at defiance the commands of God; and, in their corporate capacity, refusing to obey. The pulpits faintly reiterate

the command, thereby aggravating the guilt of disobedience, by the increased light which they shadow forth. Men will pray, and give money to do away with idolatry in India; but insist on retaining their own idols; and the Church, through her Minister, will denounce the idolatry, but place the idolater in the highest position in God's house; saying, "You must be an idolater, for the Lord has declared it; but then, should we not have the benefit of your money and position, to help forward the cause of God?'

THERE IS CASTE IN CHRIST'S HOUSEHOLD.

A CASTE, inexorable in its demands, and odious in its pretensions, is encountered in most Churches, as many bleeding, agonized hearts can testify. We have not to cross the ocean to examine amidst the glories and inconsistencies of the Churches in our fatherland, to find this heaven-provoking sin; for it is here, developing itself wherever money is unequally distributed. Members of Christ's body, occupants of the same table in the Lord's house, living in sight of each other, and daily looking each other in the face, do not even speak to each other; or if they do, the cold, distant nod sends a pang into a heart where Christ dwells. "I cannot visit there," said a sister, whose

heart the Lord had recently filled with love to overflowing. "There," was at the house of a humble Minister of Christ, and the object was, the gathering of a few souls to pray with and for the servant of Christ, and to spend an hour in conversing about the things of eternity. "I cannot go to that meeting, among the great folks who meet there," said a sister in humble life. "They do not even speak to me, and I should feel awkward in such a place." The "place," was a private dwelling, and the occasion, a social meeting for prayer, and those who met there were members of the same Church with the neglected, overlooked sister. Such are the feelings, and such the practices, in our churches. It is "caste;" against which the pulpits thunder, when found in India; but are "dumb dogs," when encountered at home. It is a "caste," far less excusable than that found in Oriental countries, or even in England, where civil institutions encourage and foster such a feeling. It is less a "caste" of talents, worth, or education, than of money; as these are most generally gentlemanly, if not charitable, in intercourse with those less favoured. How unlike the first disciples are those in whom this feeling is developed! and how unlike Christ's Apostles, are the Ministers who tolerate

such a state of things! The child of God in humble life, meets not unfrequently, with the severest trials, in the conduct of those occupying high places in God's house; and made severe, because of the right to expect different treatment. Christ is treated with contempt, in the persons of His disciples, and by His own professed people. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me," is a declaration that will astound many at the judgment. Ministers are not guiltless in this matter; for many "pay court" to money, and take "hasty leave" of poverty and scenes of distress; and will readily forsake the company of those in whom Christ dwells, and whose conversation is in heaven, to enjoy the society of those who live luxuriously, and talk about the things of earth.

THE POWER OF FASHION.

"FASHION," designed, created, and sustained by the enemy of all good, to lead souls from God, often binds Christ's professed followers more firmly than the commands of Jehovah. God says, "be not conformed to this world;" and declares that "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the

world;" but the professed disciples of Jesus say, we must not be singular; though God says, His children are "peculiar:" and if "Fashion" demands a bonnet not designed to cover the head, or a dress which trails in the dust, or a skirt of unseemly proportions, health, decency, propriety, and duty are all readily sacrificed; and the professed child of God, often vies with the child of the devil, in pushing the "Fashion" to its extremest point of endurance; and this is not only tolerated by the Church, but the Church herself is often controlled by those who thus think and act.

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY, AND ECCLESIASTICAL "COLLATIONS."

THE tendency of the age, is to "liberalized Christianity," an "accommodating spirit," a point where the professed friends, and the real enemies of God can meet, and join "congratulations," and cordially interchange a "liberal Christian greeting." Ecclesiastical "collations," where grave Doctors of Divinity are expected to appear, with "nothing to say," that they may catch the spirit of the occasion, and "be witty," and "bring down the house," and "bear off the palm of wit," are resorted to, in order to promote the cause of godliness. The followers of

Him who did not laugh, but often wept, show their zeal in His cause by imitating grovelling political scenes, where "fun and frolic" are more sought than advancement of principle.

WEARING OF GOLD AND COSTLY ARRAY.

WE are commanded to "adorn ourselves in modest apparel, and not with gold or costly array." This command is very explicit; while the practice, in many instances, is as explicitly the reverse. Said an ambassador of Him who was "meek and lowly," in a recent Missionary sermon, "How shall they be sent?" and in asking this solemn question, *imposingly* raised his left arm, showing an immense gold ring on his finger, and a heavy, massive gold chain attached to his watch. On his person, were many dollars worth of gold, placed there, in the judgment of charity, by pride. Women, professed followers of Jesus, avowed imitators of the Marys, will enter God's house on the Sabbath "adorned" with gold enough to defray the expenses of a Missionary to China. They use the money given to them by the Lord to promote His glory, to introduce themselves into, and to sustain, a "position in life," where "it is not expected," self-denial will be practised; and such women are left to believe they are ripening for glory.

"She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal." "Husband!" said such a woman lately, as the angel of death approached, "husband! promise me that when I am gone you will take this furniture out of the house, and replace it by such as may be suitable for a child of God. O, it oppresses me! I cannot bear to look upon it!" "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth;" but when the agonies of death come upon her, and the world begins to recede, "gold rings," and "bracelets," and "chains of gold," and "costly array," and "splendid furniture," become troublesome appendages; more burthensome than was "Pilgrim's" load.

PRESENT LABOUR AND POSTPONING FAITH.

MEN are exhorted to present labour, but not to expect present results; and as it is done unto us, "according to our faith," the blessing is necessarily indefinitely postponed. We must give up the idea of being saved in the future, or we shall not be saved now. The commands, threatenings, exhortations, and promises relate to this moment. God commands *present* obedience, *present* holiness, and *present* usefulness; and promises *present* blessings; even "while

they are speaking I will hear." If we are saved by faith, it is just as we are, and *now*. Legal salvation wants time to perfect a righteousness; but faith says, Lord save me *now*, and just as I am; vile, unworthy, and destitute of all things, save a sorrow for my sins, and faith in the blood that cleanses; and even these Thou hast given me.

CHRISTIAN FEASTS.

CHRISTIANS give "feasts;" but to "friends, brethren, kinsmen, rich neighbours;" and not to "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind;" and the motive is present, worldly "recompense;" and not the blessings granted "at the resurrection of the just." This command to call "the poor" to feasts, is habitually, and almost universally, disregarded; nay, more, for the Lord's money is not only not devoted to assuage the griefs and sorrows of the poor and needy, but is often used, not simply to appropriately entertain "neighbours and friends;" but expended in such luxurious profusion and extravagance, as to cause mere worldly wisdom to cry out "shame!" and ministers, not unfrequently sanction by their presence such exhibitions of pride and disobedience; yet "the poor shall never cease out of the land."

CHURCH CHRISTIANS.

MANY professors, make a virtual Saviour of the particular organization to which they are attached. They have zeal; but it is to "strengthen" *our* "stakes." In labours they are abundant; but they toil to "enlarge" *our* "tents." Often, they are noted for punctuality and assiduity in the discharge of Church and Society duties; and in conversation about the circumstantials of Society and Church matters, they find their chief delight; but a little observation detects the spring of action, and the source of joy. "The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord. The Temple of the Lord, *are* these." The Church and Society stand foremost in their thoughts and actions. They do not ignore the glory of God in the salvation of souls, as the ultimate end of all their efforts: by no means! Yet this is comparatively, and unconsciously, of minor consideration. Days, weeks, and years, pass away, without one soul being rescued; or one prayer of faith offered for such a blessing. They pray, or rather use the form of prayer; but there is no faith, no belief that God "is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him:" that is, they have a general, undefined impression that this is a Bible truth;

but for others, rather than themselves. They live, and move in, and for, a Church influence, which reaches not up to heaven, nor down to hell; but skims the surface of earth, and talks of increase of members, and lengthening of "cords." Their rest, which is less in Christ, than the Church, and its services, and duties, gives composure, and a measure of happiness, of a semi-religious character. The love of Christ does not constrain them; nor is the value of souls the subject of frequent meditation; yet they are often pillars in the Temple of the Lord; leading in circles of prayer, and occupying the foremost seats in God's house.

THERE IS TRIFLING WITH THE MARRIAGE RELATION, AND THE COMMANDS OF GOD.

THE marriage relation is trifled with. The Lord says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;" yet in every branch of the Church, this command is very generally disregarded; and the professed friends of the Saviour, intermarry with His enemies. God asks, "What agreement hath the Temple of God with idols?" and "Shouldest thou love them that hate the Lord?" Still, His professed followers, say, "Let us join ourselves to our Saviour's enemies; let us love and cling to "them that hate God;"

although the answer is, "Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord."

The Lord declares, that "whosoever shall put away his wife, save for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery;" but the laws and practices of Christ's professed disciples say, "Surely, ye shall not do evil;" and Christ's ministers join in wedlock such divorced members of their Churches, saying, "Yea, hath God said ye shall do evil in this thing? For God doth know that by joining yourselves to His enemies, you may do them good;" and so, "they rebelled against the commandments of the Lord, and went presumptuously up the hill."

CHRISTIANS PRAY FOR RIGHTEOUS, BUT VOTE FOR WICKED RULERS.

CHRISTIANS pray for righteous rulers; yet habitually vote for such men as ungodly bar-room cliques point out to them; many of them offensively vile, even in the sight of worldly men; often open infidels, using the power conferred upon them by Christian men, to legislate against God, and "frame mischief by law." The child of God goes to his closet, and asks the Lord that his "officers may be peace," and "exactors righteousness;" and from the closet repairs to the polls, and votes for an

openly unrighteous man. Such prayers mock God; and such acts tend to perpetuate Satan's rule in the earth.

A LAZY ORTHODOXY.

MULTITUDES are resting more in doctrines, than in the Son of God. A "lazy orthodoxy," a belief in doctrines, is substituted for a faith in Jesus of Nazareth, a faith which is manifested by love and works. Correct views of Sabbath observance, fan the conscience on questions of personal obedience. A zeal for doctrinal truth, is often taken to the point of separation between soul and body, as a passport to heaven. Ministers preach doctrines until their people are surfeited; and this is often less the result of a sense of duty, than a shrinking from grappling with truths which relate to holy living, and deep experience; as in this field, many pews might occupy a more elevated position than the pulpits. Men cry, "The Temple of the Lord!" Who, like, Rehoboam, lived near to the Lord's house, but far from God. Jotham "became mighty because he prepared his way before the Lord, his God;" not simply in having his head filled with sound doctrines; but in having his soul cleansed, and his heart filled with love.

FIGHTING CHRIST'S ENEMIES WITH THEIR OWN WEAPONS.

THE policy of a world presided over by the Saviour's enemy, is resorted to, in warring, in Jesus' name, against that enemy; and they whose weapons are not carnal, adopt the devil's tactics in "wrestling against principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world." In such encounters, Christ does not engage; and man, is overmatched by Satan. If a trustee, or deacon, is to be elected, the prominent question is not, Is he holy? but, Has he influence and position in the world? Will his selection give character, not in God's sight, but in the estimation of His enemies, to our enterprise? Alas! how many such men occupy seats of authority in God's house; and simply, in consequence of their money. One of the most profane men I ever met, would, on entering the Lord's house on the Sabbath, bow his head in the attitude of prayer; and if he did not prevail with the Lord, he did with His professed people. "Sea and land are compassed," to gather the rich, not so much to embrace and enjoy the religion of Jesus, as to sustain, by money and position, a particular enterprise; and if he is not made "twofold more the child

of hell" than before; he is made to sustain what he really hates; and is taken into council where every word uttered is a trumpet of condemnation to his soul. But his money and influence are united to *our* enterprise; and the Church takes one step upwards in public estimation, and one downwards in God's sight. The sin is not in getting a rich man into the society; but in the motive; in which the glory of God is less conspicuous than worldly policy.

THE STANDING STILL POLICY, AND MY NEIGHBOUR'S SOUL.

FINALLY, God's people know that these glaring, soul-destroying defects exist, yet do not seriously attempt their removal; but with folded arms cry, "Alas! Alas! This state of things is discouraging! but what can *we* do? Forgetting that it is the system, that requires amendment; as it is the system, that makes the ministry of this day, and not the present ministry, the system. The system is wrong, for it is satisfied with low attainment, and tolerates an absence of God's appointed "signs" and "seals." Under it, Christ's ministers see men falling into perdition, and hear the groans of disappointment and reproach, as they pass out of time; but the morrow witnesses no change of purpose

—no new resolve—no turning again to God. A transitory pang of conscience, a momentary trembling about the heart, and all remains as before. My neighbour's soul is among the lost! and I, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

THE CHURCH IS DISEASED.

THE disease exists; and its character and tendencies known; the one, regardless of God's authority, the other death! eternal death! and Christian men gaze upon it, as they would upon the devastation of an earthquake, or the eruptions of a volcano. The watchmen blow the trumpet, and not always with an uncertain sound; but he who blows, and he who hears, sits with folded arms; the one, not expecting obedience; the other, not disappointing his teacher's expectations. The Church is diseased! and suffers the sore to fester on! and on! and on! diffusing the poison throughout the mass; enervating and paralysing the efforts of the few, who are struggling to rise above the common level.

WHAT UNCHECKED EVILS WILL PRODUCE.

IF such is the condition of the Church and ministry, it is not difficult to see "why the country is shorn of its strength so extensively;" or to know "what is to become of the Church."

Sabbath desecration, slavery, drunkenness, lewdness, and infidelity, instead of being banished, will increase in power, and daily gain new victims and add new conquest. Once, slavery was simply tolerated; but under the spirituality of the age, it has planted itself on the word of God; and not only overrides law, but bids defiance to all power, human and divine. Because "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness they received not the love of truth, God sent them strong delusions that they should believe a lie." Being unfaithful to the light given, the most unrighteous system of bondage on earth, distrusting and distrusted, has yet proved itself superior to law; and now, audaciously, yet serenely resting on God's word, as authorizing and sanctioning its acts of robbery and murder; with its heels on the souls and bodies of men, women, and children, and its grasp on the throats of the sons of freedom, sits securely in the seat of power; insolent in bearing, exacting in demand, and tyrannical in action; and most of the religion of the day, not used to defend and support the system, cowardly succumbs to it, or ignobly shuns its giant strides.

THE FUTURE SEEN FROM THE PRESENT AND PAST.

From the past, the future is plain. If the spirit of worldly-mindedness and latitudinarianism, which so extensively prevail, are not checked, the future will record, not only an increase of present evils, but new developments that would, if seen even from *our* stand-point, startle men, and rejoice devils. If Israel, because of disregard of light and privileges, became more wicked than the heathen nations around them; even as individuals who grieve the Spirit until He is obliged to leave them, become seven-fold more wicked than their neighbours; what will our nation become, in descending from the high position which we have taken before the world? Already we are a by-word in the mouths of some of the best men on earth, and our position placed unfavourably in contrast with many of the despotisms of the old world. They cannot understand a religion which sanctions, if not enjoins, a traffic in the souls and bodies of men. The truth is, our beloved country "is shorn of its strength so extensively," by reason of the decrease of its moral power. God governs the world with reference to His Church; and if

that is unfaithful, the legitimate results will ensue. If holy, the Lord's hand will be with them for good; but if unfaithful, His hand will be against them for evil. The true prosperity of the country, under God, rests with His people; and ordinarily, their faithfulness can be read in the history of their country.

THE EFFECT UPON THE CHURCH OF CONTINUED EVILS.

A CONTINUANCE of this state of things, cannot but lead to deplorable results in the Church. We shall have more churches, but less devout worshippers; more doctors of divinity, but not more followers of St. Paul; more unprofitable controversies, with less love and charity; more ministerial lecturers, with fewer Gospel sermons; more pride, with less humility; more extension of tents, but fewer souls saved; longer prayers, with less faith; more luxuries in God's house, but fewer of the poor to hear the Gospel; and more formality, and less religion.

THE OXEN, THE FARMS, AND THE WIVES.

SUCH, it seems to me, is to be the future, looking from our stand-point, aided by the light of the past. To one who loves God, and

realizes something of the value of souls, the prospect is gloomy and discouraging. The Lord is waiting to have His people willing to receive His blessings; but the oxen, and the farms, and the wives, still plead for undivided attention, and too often receive it. The Lord says, "Prove Me;" but His people are slow to obey; and then He entreatingly says, "Turn ye!" for why will you let others die? but they hear not the accents of love and mercy; but one goes to his merchandize, and another to his plough, and time rolls on, the judgment approaches, and souls perish.

HOPE IS FOUND IN RETURNING UNTO GOD.

But, "is there no balm in Gilead?" No hope that this state of things may be averted? "No hope?" "No?" Yes, let us rejoice and give thanks to our God and Saviour, there is hope. There is "balm in Gilead." Our dispensation is one of mercy; and Christ is its surety; and love its propelling influence. There is hope; but it is only found in returning unto God. There is mercy; but only to the merciful. There are blessings in store; but only for the obedient. There is forgiveness; but only to the penitent. There is pardon; but only for those who ask for it in faith. There is an altar

that sanctifies; but only those who lay upon it. There is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; but for those only who bathe in it. There is a returning of God unto us; but to those only who return unto Him. Yes, verily, there is hope, for Christ lives to make intercession for His people; and Christians still continue to plead the merits of the Son of God. Amazing love! incomprehensible forbearance! If the Lord delights more in being the only Saviour, than the only Creator, what must we think of that love which is not exhausted in dealing with such a Church. So unwilling to leave such a habitation? "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," says our Saviour; but it is said to the obedient, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;" but it is only them who trust in that promise. "I will return unto thee;" but only to such as return unto Him.

HOW WE ARE TO RETURN UNTO GOD.

WHAT, then, must be done to avert such evils? I think you will agree with me in the opinion, that the child of God who has not daily peace and communion with his Maker, wherever he may be, when the Voice says to him, "What doest thou here?" or whatever

may have been the cause of the estrangement, the first step to take, is to return unto God; by repentance for the past, and a renewed consecration, or the entering into a new covenant for the present and future. Other things may be necessary; but these are as indispensable to a restoration to God's favour, as is food to sustain the body. There is no alternative. It must be done. It is God's command, and in His order.

THE SIMPLE PROCESS OF RETURNING UNTO GOD.

THE process is as simple, as it is efficacious, and he that runs may understand it, and the child can obey it. If going in the wrong direction, we must turn about, and go in the right way. "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more," is as necessary with us, as with Job. If the nation, Church, or individual have done wrong, they must "do no more." This is a simple rule, acted upon in other relations, without hesitation or delay.

THE MINISTER'S CONSECRATION.

SUPPOSE an aged minister of the Gospel, who had spent a long ministerial life in preaching orthodox sermons, without being permitted to

see much, if any, fruit of his labour and toil, should humble himself before his God, and anew *really* and *truly* give himself unreservedly to his Maker; and then on his knees, and with an agony of soul that should send forth tears, pray for the guiding hand of the Spirit in his preparation for the pulpit; and should, with eternity in view, enter the House of God, and in the presence of his congregation confess his past unfaithfulness, and tell them he had sought and found pardon for the past, and grace to renewedly consecrate himself to the service and will of God, and then in God's strength proceed with his discourse. All this being done, would the result be doubtful? would not the fallow ground be soon broken up, and descending mercies attest the faithfulness of God? Suppose, again, the office bearers should imitate the example of their pastor, and enter into a new covenant to live wholly for God; and before their brethren make confession for past unfaithfulness, and a declaration of their new covenant relation with their God. As God is faithful, so would the Holy Ghost honour such a scene with His special, gracious presence; and devils would tremble, heaven rejoice, and souls be saved.

JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD.

If sinners are converted, Christians *must* be holy; if the word proves a savour of life, the vessel *must* be clean; if prayer be heard and answered, the iniquity *must* be removed; if the offering be accepted, it *must* be laid upon the altar; if God be honoured, Christians *must* be humbled. All this is fully understood and believed, and rests upon the Church like a mountain, because there is no adequate, corresponding action. There is a knowledge of God's will, but not the obedience; there is light, but it produces blindness; and conviction, which tends to hardness.

A LIVING CHRISTIANITY.

The Christianity which lives for, and is from, God, makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus. We really and truly love God, and His cause supremely. This is not a matter of mere theory, it is fact and experience. It is unlike head religion, which is often bold, self-reliant, cross-shunning, and full of excuses; but it trusts, loves, is obedient, cross bearing, and full of confessions; and when iniquity is found, it is put away, with the resolve in the strength of Jesus "to do no more."

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DOUBTING, UNDECIDED CHRISTIAN.

THE faltering, doubting, undecided child of God, occupies a responsible position, and in some respects is more censurable than the man whose heart has never been changed. The one has enjoyed the sweet communications of his God, and abided "under the shadow of the Almighty;" his teacher has been the Holy Ghost, and his affections have been placed in heaven. He knows of the Saviour's love, and his Lord's faithfulness, by experience. His sins have been washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and he has known the blessedness of that man "to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." He has been on Pisgah, and surveyed the promised land; and knows that where much is given, much is required.

THE TRUE CONDITION OF MANY CHRISTIANS.

MANY such child of God, however, is to be pitied, as well as reproved. He remembers the past, the change of thoughts, habits, pursuits, &c.; how he loved the word of God, the communion of saints, and the ways of Zion: but unexpectedly, and perhaps imperceptibly, there was a partial change. He discovered within

passions pleading for indulgence, and was surprised and mortified to find how often those passions were indulged, and wondered whether he was really a converted man; but by returning unto the Lord, in humble, penitent faith, the load was removed; and again he went on his way rejoicing, only to encounter similar temptations, with like results; and this course of advancing and retreating, of sinning and repenting, he had pursued for years, until at length, in an agony of soul he exclaims, "Is there no deliverance from this bondage, in this pilgrimage state? I feel I honestly desire to avoid sin, and obey God, but my efforts seem unavailing. I resolve, and fast, and pray, and promise, only to make food for repentance, confession, and sorrow. Instead of leading others to Jesus, and having the joy of the Lord my strength, I am fighting to keep in view my own hope of heaven; and was it not that I look back to the experience attending and following my conversion, I should sink in despair; yet I know if I have not a present evidence of my acceptance and sonship, my hope is indeed a dubious one. I read the just shall live by faith; yet it seems to me that, judged by that rule, I am an unconverted man. Christ says, if I love Him, I shall keep His commandments; and by this rule I cannot stand,

though I do strive to obey, and would rather die than sin; yet I do sin. I hunger and thirst after righteousness, but am not filled; and yet Christ says such shall be filled. I want to love God with all my heart, yet I fear I do not. Why is this? why is it that a soul honestly desiring and striving to love and obey, finds it so difficult to do so? The atonement is ample, the Father commands it, Christ is in heaven to intercede for it, and the Spirit in the world to help my infirmities. Why am I so miserable? The language of my heart is, 'Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?' I seek Him in the closet, at the family altar, in the social circle, and in the public assembly, but find Him not as an indwelling Saviour. He comes at distant periods, and smiles upon me, and bids me look to Him; and then I feel after Him, but find Him not; and 'when I would do good, evil is present with me,—for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do;' and I exclaim, 'Who! who shall deliver me from this bondage?'"

THE GREAT WANT OF UNDECIDED CHRISTIANS.

This is a sad picture, and not less so, because it is true, not merely with some, but with many in the Church; who, instead of being

co-labourers with the Lord in the salvation of souls, are in their lives making such an exhibition of religion, as to lead men to doubt its reality, or to confirm them in infidelity. Such souls want the rest of faith, a simple, yet permanent resting on Christ; and will not be happy or useful, until this rest is found. Many of them are able, and perhaps willing, to teach others how to enter into this rest; but are unwilling to practise what they preach. They say, "Go;" but neither lead, nor follow. There is an indisposition to make the efforts and sacrifices necessary to obtain such blessings; and thus they continue to groan and lament, less for their slothfulness, than the absence of joys. But the law is inexorable. If we would reign, we must suffer; if we would enjoy the rest of faith, we must believe; and if we will believe, we must be consecrated; and if we *are* fully consecrated, we *shall* be self-denying and cross-bearing. The Lord says, "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you."

THE CONSECRATION GOD REQUIRES.

CONSECRATION to God, while it is a very plain, and in most respects an easy duty, is yet a very solemn one. The Lord is one of the parties to the covenant; and sinful, weak, help-

less man, the other; while Christ is its surety. God requires the surrender, and the promise is, that through Christ, we can make it. The Lord requires a deliberate yielding up to Him, through Christ, of our souls, bodies, spirits, time, talents, influence, possessions, families, friends, judgments, wills, affections, memories, imaginations, propensities, habits, thoughts, purposes, &c., to be His for ever, without reservation; to live for His glory; to suffer His will; to obey His commands; to believe His word; to recognise His hand in mercies, judgments, afflictions, bereavements, prosperity, adversity, sickness, and health; not only for this moment, or this day, but for all time; to be an everlasting covenant; and whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, the glory of God to be the controlling motive.

THE RESULTS OF CONSECRATION.

All this the Lord requires, and will not be satisfied with less. Nature may shrink, and the flesh plead for a little more liberty; the enemy may insinuate the demand is too great, more than is reasonable, and greater than we can bear; unbelief may discern deep waters in the path, and fear cry out, "Lions in the way;" but the consecration *must* be made; God *must*

be obeyed; the sacrifice *must* be laid upon the altar, and there *must* be faith in God's word which assures us the offering is accepted. All this *must* be done, if we would have "our peace like a river," and "be filled with righteousness," and have that love that "casteth out all fear." It must be a *living* sacrifice, always upon the altar which sanctifies; and a living, active faith in its acceptance; and here lies the secret of holy living:—"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith in the Son of God." Yes, the Christian lives by faith in the Son of God. Faith in the blood that cleanses; faith in the altar that sanctifies; and faith in the word which promises these blessings. It is a momentary trust in Christ for the supply of all our need; requiring ceaseless watching, ceaseless praying, and ceaseless trusting.

IN WHAT SENSE CHRIST BORE OUR SINS AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS.

CHRIST bore our sins, and griefs, and carried our sorrows, in His own body on the tree; but of those only who cast them upon Him. He sustains us under burdens, but only when they are cast upon Him, with faith in the promise, "He shall sustain thee." Christians groan, being

burdened, yet refuse to cast their burdens on the Lord. When will Christians learn the blessedness of casting their burdens on the Lord? A privilege worth ten thousand worlds! Yet how slighted. Christ *does* sustain under burdens. He *does* bear our sins, when in faith in His word, we cast them upon him. Bending under a weight of cares, which render us unhappy, and disqualify us for usefulness, we yet refuse Christ's proffered aid; and stagger on, objects of wonder to angels, and delight to devils. Verily, it is easier to build, than to be temples of the Lord: less difficult to preach faith, than to exercise it. The difficulty is, there is an unwillingness to approach near enough to the Saviour, to cast our burden on Him. We would rather stand at a distance, and thus avoid those tender glances, and the path of self-denial. To successfully cast our burdens on the Lord requires faith; and this demands a walk in the steps, and very near to the Saviour. If we could cast our burdens on the Lord from our distant position, and from that cold point exercise faith, we should be willing to make the effort; but this is not in God's order. He that will follow Christ, *must* take up his cross.

A LIFE OF UNION AND ONENESS WITH CHRIST.

THE world requires, and Christ demands, a life of union and oneness with Himself. By this, the world is to "know," and "believe," that the Father sent the Son into the world. This life of oneness, therefore, is just as important, as is the value of souls. The mass look less frequently into the Bible, to know and understand what religion is, than to the lives of its professed exponents, moving in their midst; and where this "sign" is wanting, Satan's rule is very generally acknowledged. Our Intercessor, when on earth, prayed that this might be our experience; and in heaven, He presents our prayers for the same blessing when offered in faith. A disbelief in the attainability of this state of grace, of course, incapacitates us from praying for, or reaching it. What Christ prayed for, and in that form of prayer which is believed to have been a model of the kind of prayers He now presents for His people, is it not the will of the Father to give us?

THE NARROW WAY, AND THE ANGELS PATH.

LIVING for God, is a solemn business. The path is narrow, the way straight, and the sur-

rounding dangers many; yet because of the straitness of the way, and narrowness of the path, an easy, plain way; for while *in* the narrow way, the angels have charge to keep us; and the Sun of righteousness lights up the path, and makes the way not only plain, but safe and pleasant. It is a glorious way; for in it, self is forgotten, fear banished, and dangers avoided; and all, by "looking unto Jesus." We cannot deviate at all from this narrow way; and we rejoice that it is so; for having the sentence of death in ourselves, we know we cannot trust in an arm of flesh; for the moment we step beyond the line of the path in which the angels walk, we are left to our own strength and wisdom, and then fall.

THE AMOUNT OF RELIGION WE MAY HAVE.

We have just as much religion as we live for. If much, we have it; if little, we do not have more. If we keep in the narrow way, our progress is necessarily rapid; as the "light shineth more and more," and the way becomes more and more confined; even as a long street, well lighted, *appears* to have more light, and to be more narrow, as the eye reaches forward. Ours, being a reflected light, the more light there is in our path, the less difficulty there is in

walking, and the more light we reflect. If we really want to live near to God, and be useful, we shall not be otherwise; for the Lord is waiting to have us willing to receive grace for these purposes. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

THE WAY OF FAITH, AND ITS RESULTS.

We must "have faith in God." As we live by the word, we must have faith in the word. This is our warrant at the throne of grace. The promises are "given us," that "by these, ye might be partakers of the divine nature." If the word affirms that sins confessed shall be forgiven; it also says, "As ye have believed, so be it done unto thee." When the sin is confessed, we are required to believe it is forgiven; and simply, because the word affirms it. This is faith. Living by faith, necessarily involves the idea of receiving by faith, and by the moment. Men pray, but do not believe they receive; and therefore, do not receive. My authority for believing I shall be sustained, when I cast my burdens on the Lord, is the word; and if I receive "according to my faith," it follows I must believe the word of promise; and when I do, the veracity of God is pledged that He does sustain me. I confess my sins! and then

rest on the word which assures me that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" and as this word is true, so certain is it, if I believe it, that my sins are forgiven; for we know, that such petitions are according to the will of God; and the certainty consists, not in my act of faith, though this is necessary, but in the veracity of God.

WHAT THE LIFE OF FAITH INVOLVES.

A LIFE of faith involves, first, a deep sense of our unworthiness, and utter helplessness out of Christ; and then a trust in the merits and intercession of Jesus; and these blessings can be secured only by faith in the word of God. *Living* by faith, involves the absolute necessity of living by the *moment;* of receiving each moment, the grace necessary for that moment; and here is the great stumbling block with multitudes; who forget that as they "have received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so they must walk in Him;" that if they have been cleansed by faith in the blood of Jesus, so by faith in that blood, must they continue to be momentarily cleansed; and by faith draw each spiritual breath, as all else is but moral death. If we could receive grace now, for the future, it would lead to

forgetfulness, and a feeling of independence of God. The manna, annual products, our physical existence, the word, and providence of God, and the personal experience of all saints confirm this great, but not well understood truth, that we can only live acceptably before God, but by the moment. Many persons follow the teaching of the Spirit, and the word of God, until they reach this point; and here they stagger and fall. They are cleansed, have peace and communion with God, are happy and useful, because they are watchful, prayerful, and confiding; but suffering "the little foxes," to approach in slight omissions of watchfulness, trivial neglects of "looking unto Jesus," plausible thoughts of the sufficiency of present grace, for the future, they cease to live a life of faith, and thus loose their peace, and the enemy again comes in like a flood; and they soon find they are shorn of their strength; and thus with a lifeless, listless, if not aimless existence, they continue to groan and lament.

The wholly consecrated soul is under solemn obligation to live by the moment. It is a difficult lesson to learn; yet one that can be learned, and one that is learned; though generally through a very humbling process; but not necessarily so. The flesh pleads mightily

for sight, and habit is violent for signs; but faith says, believe each successive moment; let the prevailing habit of the soul be one of "looking unto Jesus."

THE GLORIOUS WAY OF FAITH.

THE way of faith is a glorious way, and the privilege of trusting in the merits of another, great and precious. Glorious! because unmerited. Great! because of the vastness of our sins. Precious! because of our necessities. Humbling! because it exalts the Saviour at the creature's expense; and certain! because of its surety. It is glorious, because it honours God in its demands for trust in His veracity; in superseding sight, and the abandonment of the desire for "signs and wonders." Men want to see and live; to work and live; but God says, "believe," and "live;" "obey," and "live." The flesh exclaims, I "fast often!" but faith cries, "Have mercy!"

EXAMINING FOR FRUIT.

BUT I must stop, for I have already far transcended the limits I prescribed to myself when I commenced this letter; and if there is even the semblance of uncharitableness in what I have written, I shall deeply regret it; for I

would not speak harshly of any man; but to speak of fruits, entirely disconnected with the tree, is difficult; and the more so, where the tree is adorned with fair, and, often to appearance, promising foliage; for in searching for fruit, we necessarily come in contact with the leaves, as well as the tree.

THE JUDGMENT.

SOON, we shall stand in our lot; the one to meet the preparation, the other, the reception of sermons; and that will be a solemn scene; for in that hour will cluster the past and future. The light of the place will not only enable us to look back on earthly scenes of despised grace, and neglected opportunities; but the life of self, will then stand out in all its hideousness; and the value of souls will then be properly appreciated. There will be no excuses made, for not having been useful. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of the Throne;" but "Mercy and truth" had preceded; "Righteousness" is laid "to the plummet;" but grace had clung to the "line." Those eyes which once shed tears, and the lips which uttered groans over the hardness of men's hearts, do so no more. Motive will appear without a covering; and those words which were not for God;

they, will be there. The wailings of the lost, among them those we loved, will be heard; and above the general moan, and in accents clear and startling, will come up the cry, "No man cared for my soul!" Verily, it will be a solemn scene; for then we shall understand the importance of faithfulness here; know the meaning of the words, "Be ye holy;"—see the connexion between holiness and usefulness; and know how much good we might have done, had we been faithful here. Yes, and know, too, the difference between that introduction into glory, which is "so as by fire;" and that other one, which "shall be ministered abundantly."

THE RECOGNITION.

In the flesh, we shall probably not meet; but when our Father calls us up to the mansions which He has prepared for us, we shall know, and be known; and perhaps we may often converse about the things suggested by your inquiries; and then, at least, we shall "see eye to eye;" and until that happy period arrives, may we stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God;" is the prayer of

Your Brother in Christ Jesus,

A Layman.

27 July 1859.

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